

South King County Projects Update

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South King County traffic closures this week

Interstate 5

- Monday through Thursday nights, expect closures of the left lane of southbound I-5 from S. 320th to the Pierce County line from 8 p.m. to 11 a.m. for paving, weather permitting.
- Beginning Wednesday, expect long-term traffic revisions at the I-5/Boeing Access Road interchange in south Seattle for Sound Transit's light rail construction. See [Monday's press release](#) for details.

Wider SR 18 to open to traffic later this year near Maple Valley

Despite an unusually wet winter we are on track to complete [State Route 18 widening](#) east of Maple Valley this fall.

WSDOT is [widening SR 18](#) from two to four lanes between Maple Valley and Issaquah Hobart Road to keep traffic moving and to improve safety. But the project is infinitely more complex than just paving a couple more lanes of highway. In addition to the two additional lanes and new shoulders WSDOT and contractor Atkinson Construction are:

- creating a median and adding guardrail to separate eastbound and westbound traffic
- building a [new interchange](#) at 244th Avenue Southeast
- removing intersections at 236th Avenue SE, 244th Avenue SE, and SE 200th Street
- building 15 bridges, including an [overpass at SE 200th](#) and spans over [SR 169](#), [Cedar River](#) and Taylor Creek
- constructing 45 retaining walls
- creating 49 acres of [wetland mitigation sites](#)
- straightening sharp curves to improve visibility

Rain continues to be the major factor affecting the project's schedule. The SR 18 project is located in an exceptionally soggy area of southeast King County in the Cedar River watershed. In January alone 29 inches of rain fell at the project site. To put that in perspective, consider that precipitation in rainy Seattle averages about 38 inches a year. The wet weather is slowing down paving and work on retaining walls. Crews also must take extra care to ensure that muddy, dirty water doesn't get into nearby wetlands, the Cedar River and Taylor Creek, which meanders through the project.

Crews are making progress even in the face of these challenges. Last summer we shifted all traffic to the new westbound roadway and crews are now building the bridges, walls and embankments for what will become the highway's eastbound lanes. Much of the eastbound bridge and ramp work is nearly complete. And this week we expect to reopen 244th Avenue SE, which has been closed south of SR 18 since last August while crews built a bridge to replace the culvert that once carried Taylor Creek. Barring an unusually wet spring and summer, we could open all four lanes of SR 18 this October.

Crews continue widening I-5 from S. 320th to the Pierce County line

Construction on stage four of the [I-5 HOV Widening Project](#) in south King County began last spring and is scheduled to be complete next spring, so we're nearing the halfway point in this project. Although paving has been delayed by rain and sub-freezing temperatures, crews have progressed steadily on other tasks such as installing drainage and electrical systems, grading, and widening the I-5 bridges over S. 336th and SR 18. Crews have been placing forms (wood molds for wet concrete) and placing and tying the steel reinforcement for the concrete. You can see some of the construction online through our traffic cameras at [SR 18](#) and [SR 161](#).

Highway advisory radio updates

Tune your radio to 1520 AM to hear a new project update each week on I-5 in Federal Way. Questions or comments? E-mail [Laura Johnson](#).

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